

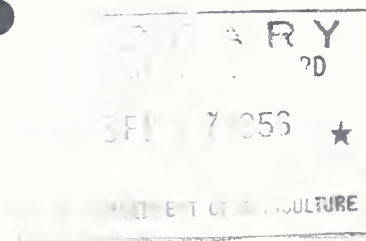
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Farm Population

ESTIMATES FOR 1956



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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FARM POPULATION -- ESTIMATES FOR 1956

The population living on farms in the United States numbered about 22,257,000 in April 1956 (table 1). This figure is not significantly different from the estimate of 22,158,000 for 1955. As farm population estimates are obtained from sample surveys, they are subject to sampling variability. In fact, the indicated increase of about 100,000 between 1955 and 1956 is within the range of variability attributable to sampling. ^{1/} Nevertheless, the sample figure for a given year represents the best estimate of the farm population for that year, regardless of the reliability of the indicated change from the preceding year.

Between April 1954 and April 1955, there was, also, only a small change in farm population. Between 1954 and 1956 the farm population has shown an increase of about 368,000. This amount is within the range of the sampling error for the two-year period. ^{2/} About the most that can be said of the period April 1954 to April 1956 is that it was apparently a time of little change in the level of the farm population.

The estimates of natural increase and migration shown in table 2 for the year April 1955-April 1956 may be best used in combination with similar figures for other years to measure changes over a several-year period, as has been done in table 3. Data for earlier years may be found in the releases "Farm Population...Migration to and from Farms, 1920-54", and "Farm Population...Estimates for 1955." Persons who use these data are encouraged not to interpret literally the indicated changes for a single year.

Changes Between 1950 and 1956.-- The farm population decreased about 2,800,000 between 1950 and 1956. This drop in farm population is a continuation of the longtime downward trend, which by 1956 reduced the number of farm residents to 13.3 percent of the total population.

During the 6-year period approximately 573,000 babies were born annually to women living on farms and about 192,000 farm people died each year (table 3). The longtime movement of people away from farms continued in this period -- about 1,428,000 persons left farms for nonfarm areas annually. This loss through outmigration was partly offset by an average of about 581,000 persons who moved from nonfarm to farm residences during each year. Thus the change in the farm population between 1950 and 1956 is the

^{1/} Even if no actual change in the size of the farm population had occurred between 1955 and 1956, the probability is that in about 45 cases out of 100 the survey would show an increase by a quantity that is greater than 100,000.

^{2/} For the two-year period, the probability is that in about 30 cases out of 100 the survey would show an increase by a quantity that is greater than 368,000.

result of the net addition of about 381,000 persons annually through excess of births over deaths, and a net annual loss by movement to and from farms of nearly 850,000 persons. 3/ Migration from farms included an average of 184,000 farm men who entered the Armed Forces, and migration to farms included an average of 86,000 who returned from the Armed Forces.

There were only minor changes in percentage distribution of farm population among geographic divisions between 1950 and 1956 (table 1). The relative positions of the divisions remained the same. The South still has approximately half of the farm population, the North Central about a third, and the Northeast and the West each has a little less than a tenth of the farm population.

The greatest percentage change in farm population between 1950 and 1956 occurred in the South. In the South farm population was 14 percent smaller in 1956 than in 1950. Among the geographic divisions of the South, the West South Central shows the biggest loss. The Northeast and the West show the least change. Each of these regions decreased about 5 percent between 1950 and 1956.

3/ The estimates of persons moving to and from farms include persons who have not moved but who were in or out of the farm population because agricultural operations ceased or were begun on places where they were living.

Table 1. - Farm population: Estimates of number of persons, percentage distribution, and percentage change, for the United States, regions, and geographic divisions, April 1, 1956 and 1950

Area	Farm Population					
	Number		Percentage distribution		Percentage change between 1950 and 1956	
	1956		1950		Percent	
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Percent	Percent	Percent
United States	22,257	25,058	100.0	100.0	-11.2	
Regions						
Northeast	1,980	2,097	8.9	8.4	-5.6	
North Central	7,215	8,005	32.4	31.9	-9.9	
South	10,999	12,793	49.4	51.1	-14.0	
West	2,063	2,163	9.3	8.6	-4.6	
Geographic Divisions						
New England	445	494	2.0	2.0	-9.9	
Middle Atlantic	1,535	1,603	6.9	6.4	-4.2	
East North Central	3,816	4,092	17.1	16.3	-6.7	
West North Central	3,399	3,913	15.3	15.6	-13.1	
South Atlantic	4,548	5,055	20.4	20.2	-10.0	
East South Central	3,717	4,315	16.7	17.2	-13.9	
West South Central	2,734	3,423	12.3	13.7	-20.1	
Mountain	824	927	3.7	3.7	-11.1	
Pacific	1,239	1,236	5.6	4.9	+ 0.2	

States included in each geographic division are given on page 8.

Table 2. - Farm Population: Estimates of number of persons, births and deaths, and movement of persons to and from the farm population for the United States, regions, and geographic divisions, 1955-56

Area	Farm population, April 1, 1956 Thou.	Natural increase			Change through migration and in classification of residence 1/				Farm population, April 1, 1955 Thou.	
		Total Thou.	Births Thou.	Deaths Thou.	Net change Thou.	Between farms and nonfarm areas or the Armed Forces 1/				Farm to farm 2/ Thou.
						Net Thou.	From farms			
							To farms Thou.	From farms Thou.		
United States	22,257	355	541	-186	-256	-256	497	-753	0	22,158
Regions										
Northeast	1,980	29	47	-18	-8	-10	48	-58	2	1,959
North Central	7,215	109	169	-60	-67	-72	152	-224	5	7,173
South	10,999	181	275	-94	-178	-169	230	-394	-14	10,996
West	2,063	36	50	-14	-3	-10	67	-77	7	2,030
Geographic Divisions										
New England	445	6	11	-5	-1	-1	14	-15	0	440
Middle Atlantic	1,535	23	36	-13	-7	-9	34	-43	2	1,519
East North Central	3,816	52	87	-35	-15	-24	86	-110	9	3,779
West North Central	3,399	57	82	-25	-52	-48	66	-114	-4	3,394
South Atlantic	4,548	80	119	-39	-63	-70	78	-148	7	4,531
East South Central	3,717	64	96	-32	-76	-54	76	-130	-22	3,729
West South Central	2,734	37	60	-23	-39	-40	76	-116	1	2,736
Mountain	824	17	22	-5	-8	-11	25	-36	3	815
Pacific	1,239	19	28	-9	5	1	42	-41	4	1,215

1/ Includes persons who have not moved but who were in or out of the farm population because agricultural operations ceased or were begun on the places where they were living. This type of change was not estimated separately for years since 1939 but is included in the estimates of movement to or from farms depending on the direction of the net difference between the changes from farm to nonfarm and nonfarm to farm residences.

2/ Net change in farm population of regions or divisions due to farm-to-farm movement.

Table 3. - Farm population: Births and deaths, and movement of persons to and from the farm population for the United States, regions, and geographic divisions, annual averages 1950-56 1/

Area	Natural increase			Change through migration and in classification of residence 2/				
	Total Thou.	Births Thou.	Deaths Thou.	Net change Thou.	Between farms and nonfarm areas or the Armed Forces 2/			Farm to farm 3/ Thou.
					Net Thou.	To farms Thou.	From farms Thou.	
United States	381	573	-192	-848	-848	581	-1,428	0
Regions								
Northeast	28	46	-19	-47	-47	64	-111	0
North Central	110	176	-66	-241	-241	180	-421	0
South	208	302	-93	-508	-503	260	-764	-4
West	35	49	-14	-52	-56	77	-133	4
Geographic Divisions								
New England	6	11	-5	-14	-15	18	-33	1
Middle Atlantic	22	36	-14	-33	-33	46	-78	-1
East North Central	54	89	-35	-100	-100	98	-199	1
West North Central	56	87	-31	-142	-141	81	-222	-1
South Atlantic	85	123	-38	-170	-165	96	-261	-4
East South Central	73	106	-32	-173	-168	86	-253	-5
West South Central	50	73	-22	-165	-171	79	-249	6
Mountain	17	22	-6	-34	-36	31	-67	2
Pacific	18	26	-8	-18	-20	46	-66	3

1/ Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand without being adjusted to group totals.

2/ Includes persons who have not moved but who were in or out of the farm population because agricultural operations ceased or were begun on the places where they were living. This type of change was not estimated separately for years since 1939 but is included in the estimates of movement to or from farms depending on the direction of the net difference between the changes from farm to nonfarm and nonfarm to farm residences.

3/ Net change in farm population of regions or divisions due to farm-to-farm movement.

Definition of Farm Population.-- The data presented in this report relate to the population living on farms, both urban and rural, regardless of occupation. The farm population is defined according to the new definition adopted for the 1950 Census of Population. According to this definition, the farm population includes all persons living on farms, as determined by the question, "Is this house on a farm (or ranch)?" Persons living on what might be considered farm land are classified as nonfarm if they pay cash rent for their homes and yards only. Persons in institutions, summer camps, "motels", and tourist camps are classified as nonfarm residents. Usual place of residence for unmarried persons attending college away from home is defined differently in the 1950 Census of Population and the Current Population Survey (CPS) of the Bureau of the Census from which current estimates of the farm population of the United States are obtained. In the 1950 Census, such persons were enumerated as residents of the communities in which they lived while attending college, whereas in the CPS they are considered as residents of their parents' homes.

Note on Method of Developing Farm Population Estimates.-- The foregoing tables contain estimates derived from four principal sources: (1) Current Population Surveys of the Bureau of the Census, from which the Census-AMS estimates of the total farm population of the United States are derived; (2) annual surveys of the farm population of the Agricultural Marketing Service from which the geographic distribution and components of change in the farm population are derived; (3) decennial population censuses; and (4) other related data.

Limitations of the Estimates.-- Estimates for the United States presented in this report are based on data obtained in connection with the Current Population Survey of the Bureau of the Census. As the estimates are based on sample data they are subject to sampling variability. According to preliminary computations from the survey, the relative sampling error in the estimated farm population of the United States is about 3 percent. The chances are about 68 out of 100 that an estimate of the total farm population from the sample would differ from a complete census by less than this percentage. The chances are about 95 out of 100 that the difference would be less than twice the specified percentage and about 99 out of 100 that it would be less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the percentage. As in any survey work, results are also subject to errors of response and nonreporting.

Data for geographic areas are based on AMS mailed-questionnaire survey data tied to benchmark figures from complete censuses and adjusted to total estimates of farm population obtained from the enumerative sample surveys of the Bureau of the Census. The reliability of any geographic area estimate is therefore dependent upon the reliability of the United States estimate, discussed above, and in addition upon the reliability of the mailed-questionnaire survey. The reliability of the estimates based on the AMS survey is dependent upon the size of the sample and the representativeness of returns from the mailed-questionnaire survey. Estimates for geographic areas may become less reliable with the passage of time since the 1950 benchmark data.

Estimates for the geographic divisions that resulted from the mailed-questionnaire survey data should be used with caution, particularly those for which the sample was relatively small. Size of sample is important in analyzing components of change in the farm population, especially in appraising any changes that occur from one year to another. The reliability of year-to-year changes is much less than that of trends shown during a period of several years. (See Page 1.) Figures for areas that contain relatively large numbers of people with marginal connections to agriculture may be subject to greater error than those for other divisions, even for benchmark dates.

Number of farms reported on in annual mailed questionnaire,
farm population survey, 1956

Area	Farms April 1956
	<u>Number</u>
United States	88,249
Regions	
Northeast	9,707
North Central	39,057
South	30,244
West	9,241
Geographic Divisions	
New England	1,056
Middle Atlantic	8,651
East North Central	13,590
West North Central	25,467
South Atlantic	10,366
East South Central	10,833
West South Central	9,045
Mountain	5,670
Pacific	3,571

States in the geographic divisions are: New England: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut; Middle Atlantic: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania; East North Central: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin; West North Central: Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas; South Atlantic: Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida; East South Central: Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi; West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas; Mountain: Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada; Pacific: Washington, Oregon, California.

Divisions in the regions are: Northeast: New England, Middle Atlantic; North Central: East North Central, West North Central; South: South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central; West: Mountain and Pacific.

Related Reports

Among the principal releases of the former Bureau of Agricultural Economics issued since 1939 which contain farm population estimates for geographic areas are:

Farm Population Estimates, United States, and Major Geographic Divisions, 1910-42, November 1942.

Farm Population Estimates, United States, and Major Geographic Divisions, 1910-1946, June 1946.

Farm Population Estimates, United States, and Major Geographic Divisions, 1940-1947, States 1940-1945, August 1947.

Farm Population Estimates, (specified date) containing current estimates issued from time to time.

Estimates in those releases are of historical interest only; they are superseded by the estimates in later reports.

Reports issued since 1950 by the Agricultural Marketing Service which include estimates comparable to those in this release are:

AMS-120 Farm Population...Annual Estimates by States, Major Geographic Divisions, and Regions, 1920-50... and for the United States, 1910-50, (November 1953).

AMS-10 Farm Population...Migration to and from Farms, 1920-54, (December 1954).

AMS-80 Farm Population...Estimates for 1955, (December 1955).

The cooperative releases of the former Bureau of Agricultural Economics and now of the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Bureau of the Census in Farm Population, Series Census-BAE, now called Census-AMS (P-27), contain current estimates of the distribution of the total farm population of the country by age, sex, labor force status, and other related material.

Farms and Farm People, a special cooperative report of the former Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Bureau of Human Nutrition and the Bureau of the Census, contains data on the characteristics of the population in farm-operator households by economic class of farm (based on 1950 Censuses of Population and Agriculture), as well as a discussion of the definitions of farm population and farm-operator household population. The various Censuses of Population publications of the Bureau of the Census contain detailed data on the characteristics and geographic distribution of

the rural-farm population. In addition, certain of the Current Population Reports, particularly those in Series P-20, P-50, and P-60, published by the Bureau of the Census, contain current estimates relative to the characteristics of the rural-farm population of the country.

Estimates of the number of persons moving between farms and non-farm areas and of the characteristics of persons making these farm-nonfarm shifts have been published by the Bureau of the Census. The estimates published by the Census differ somewhat from those published by the Agricultural Marketing Service because of the sampling techniques used and concepts involved. The estimates of the Bureau of the Census come from the Current Population Survey and those of the Agricultural Marketing Service are based primarily on data submitted by crop reporters. The Current Population Survey estimates of farm-nonfarm shifts do not include changes of classification from farm to nonfarm or vice versa for persons living in the same house as a year earlier. In the Agricultural Marketing Service series, persons who have not moved but who were included in or excluded from the farm population because agricultural operations were begun or ceased during the year on the places where they were living are included in the estimates of movement to or from farms, depending on the direction of the net difference between the changes to and from farm classification.

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